

SOCIETY SEEKS HELP FOR BLIND CHILDREN (Cont'd. from page 1)

Surprisingly for many, their contact with the parents' group is their first hope that some help may be available to them before their child reaches grade school age. Not so surprising is their most pressing concern, that of assuring adequate training and education for their child.

Training Must Start At Earlier Age

Unfortunately, it is the area of special training for the very young or preschoolers that is terribly lacking here in Toledo. Teaching the youngsters the very basics of mobility and just getting along with others outside of their own family circle is one of the most fundamental problems that must be solved before any child can start the more formal educational process of learning even the three "R's." Toledo schools do have special classes for the blind and low vision, but they do not start until the first grade. Unlike programs for other types of handicapped children, we have no preschool nursery program, either public or private, in which a visually handicapped child can be helped to prepare for entry into the public school system. We are investigating the possibility of establishing such a school with the parents, but to make it a reality a great deal of help will be needed.

Teacher Shortage

Paradoxically, according to the parents and to the Society's own view, the emphasis for special schools for the blind and low vision during grade school and high school is quite different. At grade school level the special classes provided by the Toledo public schools are well planned but they are constantly plagued by the shortage of teachers who must have very special qualifications. As a group movement, the parents of the low vision children are preparing to offer a scholarship program to teachers as an incentive to enter this field. This will not solve their problem, but it is certainly a move in the right direction.

Text Books Scarce

At the high school level, an excellent school and vocational training is available at the Ohio State School for the Blind in Columbus, Ohio. Experience, however, is now showing us that the student can really be much better prepared to take his or her place in community life if he or she can continue to live at home and attend regular classes in the public or parochial school systems. As opposed to the more sheltered institutional living at Columbus, staying within their own community provides students with a much higher degree of self-reliance and confidence. More than that, it allows the young person to make the lasting friendships and contacts so necessary for finding employment and living a useful, balanced life.

More and more blind children are now attending Toledo high schools, but as pointed out at our most recent meeting with the parents of the blind, the going is tough due primarily to the lack of special text books that have been transcribed into braille. Mr. William Ford of the Toledo Board of Education, who was also in attendance, advised that "good braille text books are just not to be had."

Lyle Kirk, our own executive director, explained that the Society does have a braille machine available which will copy texts once they have been transcribed into braille, as does the Toledo Board of Education. "But," he added, "the original braille transcriptions are very scarce despite the volunteer effort of two local groups doing the transcribing: the sisters of St. Anthony's Villa and the Collingwood Avenue Temple Sisterhood for Services to the Blind."

This whole area of finding text books must be solved if we are to provide the education these children need and certainly deserve.

Tape Recorders Needed

As a practical solution, many of the parents who have the time and ability are now making tape recordings as they read the texts to their children. As a group project, the parents organization is attempting to supply portable recorders and players to each of the students as they enter high school. For people already burdened with the many extra medical and transportation expenses involved in caring for a handicapped child, this is quite a herculean undertaking.

New Guide Will Help

On a broader note, our Toledo parents are also working with the Ohio State School for the Blind in preparing a new booklet entitled, "A Guide for the Development of the Young Visually Handicapped . . . a Selected List of Activities." As the title indicates, the booklet is designed to help parents acquaint their blind child with the experiences of the outside world, and help the child develop a consciousness of himself as well. A preliminary version of the booklet has been distributed to the more than forty parents attending our last meeting. These parents will review the material, and the various activities listed to test their validity and usefulness. The parents comments will then be reviewed by the State School, appropriate edits made of the book, and final publication scheduled—hopefully next year.

The booklet represents the first "outside" help ever offered to the parents of Toledo's young blind children.

Need Community Support

This organizing of the parents, their efforts on the behalf of their own children, and the publishing of a book in Columbus are far from finding the total solutions for our blind children. We are convinced, however, that we are moving in the right direction. If we can now count on the support of our community, we know progress will be made.

The Toledo Society For The Blind NEWS

A NEWS LETTER TO HELP YOU BECOME BETTER INFORMED ABOUT THIS RED FEATHER AGENCY

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1819 Canton Avenue

Telephone 243-8239

SOCIETY SEEKS HELP FOR BLIND CHILDREN

Preschool Training — Teachers

Text Books Are Most Critical Needs

"Mr. and Mrs. . . . , your baby is blind." These heart breaking words, despite the advances of medicine and genetics, are still all too often heard by parents in our community. The problems of raising these blind or visually handicapped children and to eventually train them to take a productive place in our modern society remains one of the most pressing—and neglected—community problems.

As a starting point to help these children, The Society for the Blind has asked the parents of blind and low vision children to meet with the Society to share their common experiences and hopefully seek new and better ways to solve their common problems.



At a recent Society meeting, concerned parents of our blind children listened attentively as Robert Mills, peripatologist from the Ohio State School for the Blind, asks their cooperation in preparing "A Guide for Development of the Young Visually Handicapped."

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TIME TO ORDER YOUR 1968 HOLIDAY CARDS

The kids are back in school, soon Halloween and the other Fall holidays will be upon us. One important project to take care of soon is the choosing and ordering of Christmas cards.

Again this year, the Society is making available a choice of four beautiful cards which you can order in any quantity, imprinted with your name if you wish.

Your Christmas Greeting Will Carry Extra Meaning

Christmas cards from the Society do more than wish a merry holiday season for your friends and relatives. They also represent a contribution to the Society for the Blind's many activities. These are "extra-curricular" activities not provided for by United Appeal Funds, such as, summer camp, eye screening for young people, community medical clinic at St. Vincent hospital, family nights, help for blind bowlers, and the annual visit from Santa Claus to our blind children.

To Order Your Cards

The cards are easy to order, just fill out the enclosed postpaid order blank, with or without imprint (up to three lines), and mail it to us. You will not receive a bill or invoice from us for these cards. We only ask that you make a contribution to the Society. Anything over the amount you usually pay for your holiday cards is tax deductible.

PROGRESS REPORT

As the Society's program grows and as we serve more and more of the area's blind, the need for additional modern facilities becomes acute. Planning and the accomplishment of a few of these additions have been completed, but much more work has yet to be done.

Building Expansion

Among our biggest and most ambitious plans is the extension of our present building from Canton Avenue all the way to 12th Street. The space is needed for an enlarged vocational training center,



Bill Lazenby, a blind mobility trainee, strengthens his leg muscles on a stationary bicycle before beginning a training session with his cane.

new diagnostic and testing equipment, and an extension of the Industrial Division's sheltered workshop. The land for the extension has been purchased, cleared, and surveyed. We hope that in our next newsletter we can tell you building plans are underway.

Work Done Inside

Work inside our building is progressing satisfactorily. Everything has been painted and a new Peripatology Room in the basement is nearly completed. This Mobility Room (that's easier to pronounce) has its own sidewalks, complete with curbs, and a small stairway with handrails. Heretofore, even our beginners in mobility training had to

Mrs. Jane Leslie, Society's social worker and Mr. Don Norwood, Personnel Manager, look wishfully at a drawing of our proposed building expansion.



practice on the city streets. In the same room we've also added a treadmill, bicycle exerciser and a simple weight lifting devise. This was needed because without the mobility training many of our blind have not been able to move about since losing their sight. Even walking can be difficult when muscles have been unused for a long period of time.

In an adjoining basement room our next project will be construction of what we call our Techniques of Daily Living Room. This will consist of a model three room apartment in which our blind will be taught the many day-to-day functions required to keep house, cook their own meals, wash and iron, and sew their own clothes—all away from the well-meaning, but not always understanding sighted members of the family at home.

Next on our priority list is finding a way to expand our regular kitchen and dining room. These facilities, which we long ago outgrew, are used daily to serve the now over seventy blind and visually handicapped persons who are employed in our Industrial Division, as well as for nearly all Society social functions.

If it weren't for the generosity of our many friends none of these projects could even be considered. We thank you all and pray that you will continue to help us to help the blind help themselves.

LOANED EXECUTIVES

One reason why Toledo's annual United Appeal Drive usually meets with success is that every year a number of local businesses loan one or more of their executives to the United Appeal to help organize the solicitation from Toledo companies. As a part of a three-day training session, the men are asked to visit many of the United Appeal agencies.

It was a blistering afternoon when they visited the Society, but the men obligingly shed their coats and listened attentively as Society president John Goerlich explained the Society's programs and hopes for the future.

We thank these men and their companies for their time and we wish them good luck and God's speed on this very important undertaking.



SPORTS CAR CLUB HOLDS FIRST BRAILLE RALLY FOR TOLEDO'S BLIND

Toledo's first Braille Sports Car Rally was REALLY great! There was plenty of food, fun, and trophies for the participants and we can't adequately express our thanks to all who helped. Besides providing our blind friends with a much needed and greatly appreciated day's outing, the entrance fees donated by the Sports Car Club of America brought in nearly \$115 for our Eye Screening Program.

THANKS!

A great big THANKS goes out to Mrs. Hugh Kirk of the Northwest Ohio Region of the Sports Car Club of America, who was rally chairman, and to Mr. Wayne Zitkus, who was rallymaster. Without their organizational skills and technical help, we could not have had a rally.

A Braille Rally is one in which the sighted driver relies totally on his blind navigator, who is reading the rally directions in Braille for the first time. The directions for our rally took the cars over a 70-mile route through Monroe County, Michigan and back



The "jumping off point" for Toledo's first Braille Rally was the AP Parts Corporation parking lot across the street from the Society. Here drivers and navigators assembled for a briefing prior to beginning the rally.

to the Society. It was a real thrill for our navigators, many of whom were taking their first ride in a sports car.

Wide Point Spread

Rallies are scored on a penalty point system. Cars are given points for missing checkpoints, driving too fast or too slow, or getting there early or late. The car with the least points wins. The point range for our rally was from 95 for the team of Margaret Wensel and John Toepfer to around 1400 for a team who'd best remain nameless.



Mrs. Hugh Kirk of the Sports Car Club of America gives last minute instructions to driver and navigator before sending them on their way.



Society Director Lyle Kirk gives some friendly advice of his own to one of the drivers as he introduces him to his navigator, Mary Ellen Reihing.

Adding to the success of the Braille Sports Car Rally was the cooperation we got from local media. WSPD-TV showed films on the news the day of the rally and the BLADE and several weekly neighborhood papers ran picture stories for us.

By the time all the cars had returned, trophies had been awarded, and stories exchanged, everyone was pretty tired. But no one cared because it had been a great day for our blind and all their new friends.

Top Ten Finishers

1. John Toepfer and Margaret Wensel
2. John Dent and Adeline Opelt
3. Bill Potvin and Eloise Bergman
4. Bill Bauman and Robert Krause
5. Bill McDowell and Josephine Brooks
6. Dave Bobak and Jerome Graczk
7. Sue Potvin and Mary Ann Smith
8. John Walkden and Udell Useen
9. Frank Sautter and Patrice Graves
10. John Jacobs and Virginia Stanby

Sweet Gal With A Sweet Tooth

Thanks to this sweet gal, Judy Holke, buying a piece of candy from Lion's Club member Jim Hackley—and the thousands of other guys and gals who bought candy from the Lion's Club members last month—the Lion's annual candy sale in Toledo was a great success.

It should have noted, however, the money collected represents only a small percentage of the money Lion's Club contributes each year toward blind welfare. Most comes from voluntary contributions of Club members.



The Lion's Club is a service organization of business and professional men committed to the assisting of the blind and furthering the many programs of Sight Conservation and Sight Saving Education.

OUT WITH THE TIDE

We are very saddened at the untimely death of Walter Hartough. He was 54. Walter was a long time member of our Society's board of directors and was individually responsible for establishing the accounting procedures we use at the Society today. He was also one of our dearest friends. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

FOR THE YEAR 1968			
1. Blind and Sight Conservation Clients:			
As of July, 1967.....	839		
As of July, 1968.....	884		
2. Blind Interviews—Office, Homes, Rest Homes, Hospitals, Etc.			
By Professional Staff.....	1570		
By Volunteers.....	58		
3. Sheltered Workshop			
Workers.....	71		
Home Industries Workers.....	29		
4. Group Activities	Times	Attendance	
Save Your Sight			
Film Showings.....	30	1772	
Talks and Demonstrations ...	5	129	
Tours of Facility.....	28	421	
"Family Nite Programs" and Christmas Party	12	1987	
Parents of Toledo Blind Children		95	
Other Activities: Bowling, Swimming, Outings, Hobby Clubs, Etc.....		6382	
Camp Yukita (one week)		102	
Preschool Eye Screening		836	
Volunteer Participation		873	
5. Other Services:			
Talking Books in Service.....	761		
Eye Exams and Glasses Issued	103		
White Canes Issued	48		
Radios Issued	5		
Circulation of Publications:			
"Goin' On" - Monthly.....	600		
Society Newsletter - Semi-annual	9000		